

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 03794 171104Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 EUR-12 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-07
/076 W
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R 171006Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3543

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 3794

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, ET, US
SUBJECT: OSMAN SABBE REQUESTS MEETING WITH EMBASSY OFFICIAL

REF: DAMASCUS 3795

1. REFTEL REPORTED SOME DETAILS OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN ERITREAN LEADER OSMAN SABBE AND ITALIAN EMBOFF PROVIDED BY LATTER. SABBE VISITED ITALIAN PRIMARILY TO ARRANGE TO MEET A SENIOR ITALIAN OFFICIAL IN LEBANON JUNE 18. DURING CONVERSATION, SABBE MENTIONED THAT HE MET ABOUT A MONTH AGO WITH "AMERICAN AMBASSADOR" IN ABU DHABI AND THAT AN OFFICIAL OF SABBE'S CAIRO OFFICE HAD MET PREVIOUS WEEK WITH AN AMERICAN EMBOFF THERE. ITALIAN SAID THERE MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN A MEETING IN JIDDA AS WELL BUT HE COULD NOT BE CERTAIN FROM SABBE'S IMPRECISE REMARK. IN ANY CASE, SABBE SAID HE WAS "DIS-SATISFIED" WITH THESE MEETINGS AND WANTED TO MEET WITH ONE OF OUR EMBOFFS HERE IN DAMASCUS. ACCORDING TO ITALIAN SOURCE, SABBE HAS A NUMBER OF THINGS CONCERNING THE SOVIETS THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO PASS ALONG. IN GENERAL, NOTED ITALIAN, SABBE SEES SOVIETS AS MOVING QUICKLY TO EXPAND THEIR INFLUENCE WITH ERITREANS AND BELIEVES US MAY BE MISSING AN "OPPORTUNITY" TO BOLSTER ITS OWN INFLUENCE. (COMMENT: SABBE MAY HAVE IN MIND HIS MEETING WITH SOVIET REPS LAST WEEK IN KHARTOUM, WHICH HAS BEEN REPORTED IN INTERNATIONAL PRESS.)

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PAGE 02 DAMASC 03794 171104Z

2. ITALIAN WAS SURPRISED TO LEARN ABOUT ERITREAN MEETINGS WITH USG OFFICIALS IN VIEW OF HIS UNDERSTANDING OF OUR POLICY REGARDING ERITREAN CONTACTS, AND ASKED HOW HE SHOULD RESPOND TO SABBE. WE TOLD HIM THAT WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HEARING ANY REMARKS SABBE MADE TO HIM.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: WE REMAIN UNDERTAIN WHETHER STATE 100281 AUTHORIZED ACTION POSTS, INCLUDING DAMASCUS, TO RESPOND TO LOCAL ERITREAN INITIATIVES TO MEET WITH EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES, OR WHETHER IT AUTHORIZED ONLY ABU DHABI AND JIDDA TO OCCASIONALLY LISTEN TO ERITREAN VIEWS. WE ALSO STILL WAITING FOR DEPARTMENT REPLY TO DAMASCUS 2943. PLEASE ADVISE.

PELLETREAU

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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